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ECCLESIASTES.



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THE BOOK OF SOLOMON,

CALLED

# ECCELESIASTES;

OR, THE PREACHER,

METRICALLY PARAPHRASED, AND ACCOMPANIED WITH AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENT:

BEING A

*Retranslation of the Original Hebrew,*

ACCORDING TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE RABBINIC COMMENTARY OF MENDELSSOHN,  
THE CRITICISMS OF PRESTON, AND OTHER ANNOTATORS.

THE SUBJECT NEWLY ARRANGED, WITH ANALYTICAL HEADINGS TO THE SECTIONS.

BY

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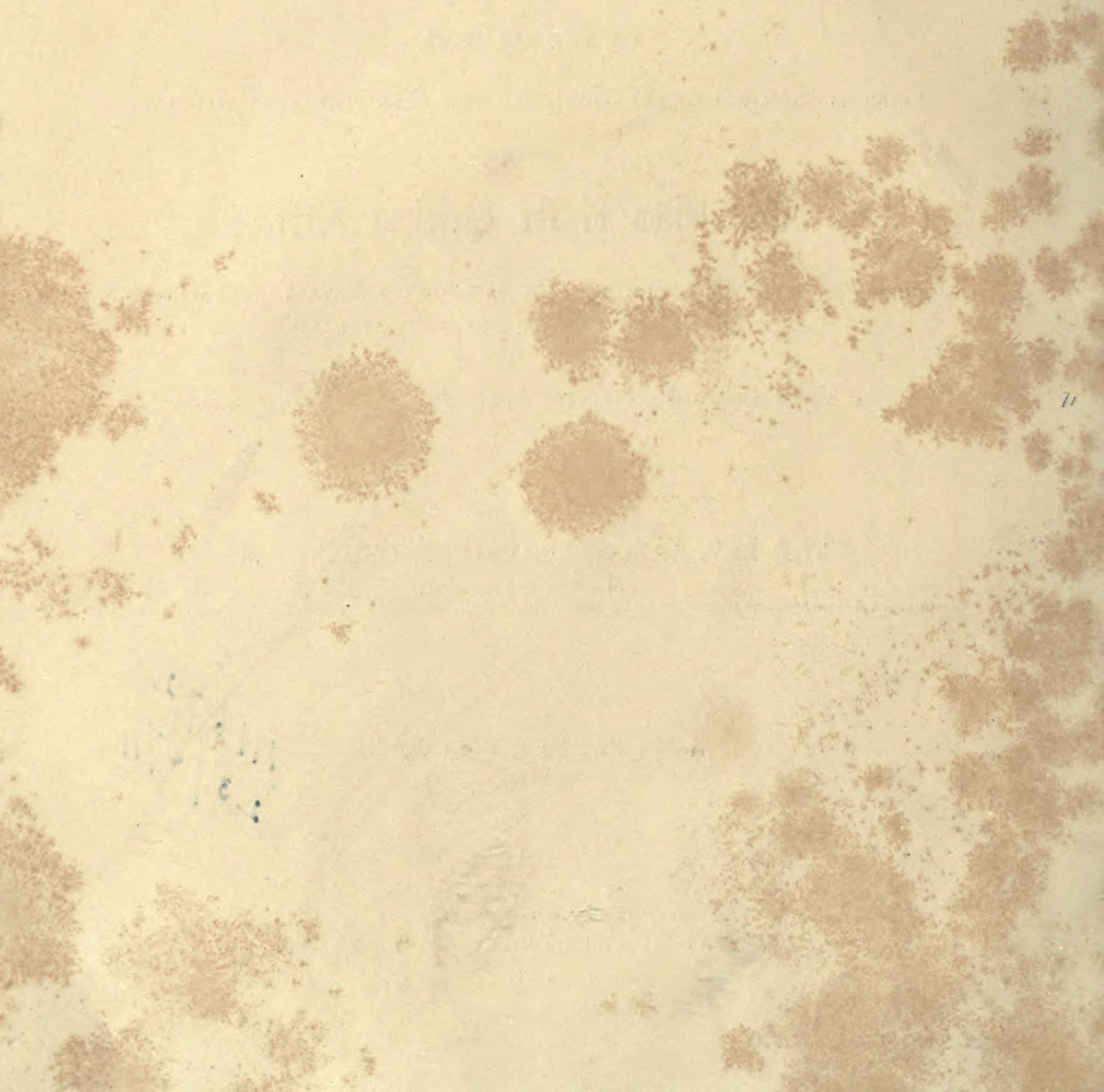
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TO THE

REV. HENRY BAILEY, B.D.

WARDEN OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE, CANTERBURY

THIS ATTEMPT TO EXHIBIT

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES IN A CONNECTED FORM

IS DEDICATED

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF

BY-GONE VALUABLE HOURS PASSED UNDER HIS TUITION

BY THE AUTHOR.







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THE BOOK OF SOLOMON

CALLED

E C C L E S I A S T E S.

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ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENT.







## ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENT.



THE book of Ecclesiastes is in the form of a philosophical Essay or Treatise, and in this respect it differs from the other Sacred Writings. In it Solomon demonstrates, first, that true happiness cannot be found in any of the means or appliances of the present world, owing to their uncertain and transitory nature; he then proceeds to establish the immortality of the soul, and a future judgment, by arguments based on the confused spectacle of Wrong, Inequality, and Injustice presented here on earth; and after delivering several precepts, social, political, and religious, bearing on the general welfare and happiness of mankind, he draws the conclusion that in the fear of God and the keeping of His commandments, or in other words, in a life regulated with constant reference to a future state of existence and a final Account, true happiness consists.

He commences by asserting the vanity of all earthly things, viewed in themselves, and illustrates their monotony and endless recurrence by examples drawn from natural phenomena. For instance, the generations of man follow each other in constant succession; they ply the same round of incessant toil, without the power of effecting any substantial change; they cannot increase or diminish the bulk of the earth, although they may vary the surface of it, and thus they depart without having produced anything that could strictly be called new. The course of the elements is equally without novelty; the winds and waters fulfil their appointed revolutions, and recommence them again and again; and in like manner human events are constantly being reproduced; so that it may be truly affirmed that man cannot emerge from his present sphere so as to produce any new development of it.

Such Solomon describes as having been his meditations before he had absolutely applied the test of experience to the various resources of life. He now states that he first examined experimentally the departments of philosophy and science, and found



nothing in them that could afford solid and lasting satisfaction; on the contrary, Wisdom offered so vast a field for research, that its labours seemed interminable, and the fathoming of its depths hopeless. So that indeed Folly might be said to be on a level with it in this respect, that it promised nothing but disappointment. He then made trial of Mirth, with the view of testing Philosophy's opposite extreme, but with a similar result.

His next experiment was to combine the two, and mingle gaiety with scientific pursuits. Possessing as a wealthy and wise king every possible advantage for making the experiment, he recounts the various measures he adopted; how he accumulated all earthly means of enjoyment, and at the same time prosecuted his scientific labours, until he had attained to the very pinnacle of human greatness. But, on taking a thoughtful survey of all these things, he found them incapable of satisfying the cravings of the mind, and consequently pronounced them vain and unprofitable. He admits, however, that one effect of this experiment was to convince him that the wise man has a present advantage over the fool in the benefits resulting from Reflection and Intelligence, (which advantages he subsequently enlarges on); still, as Death must eventually reduce both to the same level, he pronounced this superiority of Wisdom over Folly unsatisfactory, and he admits that the reflection that both should be subject to the same fate, filled him with despondency, and even tempted him to hate existence. He adds that his gloom was further increased by the thought that a successor would sit on his throne, and reap the fruits of his works and scientific labours; and the possibility of that successor being an unworthy one, almost led him to the verge of despair.

He then sought refuge in the doctrine that the various conditions of life are so distributed by God that, knowing beforehand individual characters, He condemns the bad only thus to toil and accumulate for the good; but this supposition, involving the mysterious subject of God's foreknowledge, yielded him no solid satisfaction.

After thus recounting the doubts and perplexities under which he once laboured, he now asserts the true state of things, announcing that man's times and seasons are overruled by Divine providence and appointment, with regard to the lesser events of life as well as the greater. The seasons of birth and death, of sickness and recovery, of joy and sorrow, the fluctuations of passion, the promptings of the tongue, and even the gentle yearnings of affection; all these are subservient to the appointment of God, who has decreed their exercise at set and unalterable times. And if it be objected, "What advantage hath a man in all the labour and activity which he exerts on earth, if results be so immutably arranged, that human efforts cannot influence them?" it may be borne in mind, as a sufficient answer, that man's duty and happiness lie in a contented acquiescence with the Divine scheme and in the confidence that God orders everything for the best in its season. Moreover, He graciously implants in every man a stimulus, which inclines him to labour in his particular department while at the same time he is unconsciously fulfilling the designs of Heaven. Solomon accordingly



recommends cheerfulness, joined with the communication of good to others, as the best, as it is in fact his only alternative, because God has so ordered the different events of life to succeed each other, that it is hopeless for man to attempt their alteration.

He now introduces the great doctrine of a future Judgment. The spectacle of justice perverted and righteousness suffering oppression led him to the conviction that this confusion of things would eventually be readjusted, and that in the end Virtue would receive its reward and Vice its punishment; and that, though God's retributive justice may appear dormant in the present world, there is, nevertheless, an appointed doom for every human work and action.

With regard to a popular fallacy, that this great truth is discoverable from the superior dignity of man compared with the beasts that perish, distinguishing him evidently as the creature of God's special choice; Solomon observes, that viewed by themselves, and antecedently to any knowledge of that destiny which He has appointed for them hereafter, men are in many respects on a level with the brute creation. As far as the body is concerned, they are liable to the same accidents, so that man's outward aspect affords no clue to his immortality; and with regard to the soul, inspiration alone can reveal its invisible mysteries, and announce its upward flight after emancipation from the body, while the spirit of the beast descends to earth. Judging man therefore, and his condition, only from what we see in this world by the vision of sense, there is nothing to show that he is not, like other animals, equally liable to perish. It would then follow, that his future fate being involved in obscurity, free enjoyment of the present world would be the most desirable thing to recommend to him, since no motive for restraint would exist. Solomon therefore resumes his former argument as the most conclusive one to demonstrate the certainty of the soul's immortality and a future Judgment, and repeats that the contemplation of oppression and wrong prevailing with impunity over helplessness convinced him of an ultimate retribution, when such inequalities would be set right, and the Justice of the Divine Government vindicated; for in fact, were no such readjustment in perspective, death would be more desirable to many than life,

Having thus established this fundamental truth as the basis of all responsibility, and the great incentive to Virtue, he proceeds to notice several vanities common to human nature; intermingling various precepts with a view to their correction, and on the observance of which the general happiness of mankind, both here and hereafter, depends. He remarks that Industry, though in itself laudable, is often stimulated by unworthy motives, such as a man's jealousy of the prosperity of his neighbour, which causes him to toil incessantly with the view of putting himself on the same level. This he considers as great a vanity as the conduct of the sloth, who consumes his patrimony without making any effort to increase it, and reduces himself at length to penury. He accordingly recommends a mean between an ill-directed industry on the one hand and a reckless indolence on the other.



The case of the solitary miser is another instance of the vanity or emptiness of the aims of men. Self-banished from the enjoyments of social intercourse, he prosecutes one absorbing and sordid object, and wastes his existence without either imparting good to others or tasting the fruits of his own labours. Such a one is a rebel against that ordination of God which contemplates man as a social being, and agreeably to which he has been furnished with the kindred inclinations of sympathy and friendship. These capacities God intends him to exercise, and hence marriage must be regarded as man's normal estate; and in the endearing ties of wife and offspring the kindly feelings of human nature are interwoven and strengthened, and the innocent enjoyments of life increased.

He next comments on the vanity of courting popular favour, which is invariably fickle and prone to novelty, and illustrates this waywardness in the case of subjects towards their king. Eager for change, they cast off their loyalty to the existing monarch, and attach themselves to his successor, who in his turn is exposed to the fickleness of their posterity.

He now gives rules of religious observance, and enjoins reverence and circumspection in the House of Prayer. Meditation is the proper forerunner of worship, otherwise there is the danger of foolish and inconsiderate petitions being offered to the throne of Grace. He annexes a caution against making religious vows rashly, lest the weakness of human nature should interfere with their performance, and involve a man in perjury, and probably induce him to frame some false pretext by way of justification. Forethought and recollection, therefore, should precede all acts of devotion.

He next inculcates the duty of honouring and obeying the King. Particular abuses indeed are not to be attributed to him, for he cannot be regarded as responsible for all the errors in a government. The administration of a state is in fact distributed among various ranks of executives, and the responsibility divided; for it would be impossible for one man to superintend the details of the whole. The condition and welfare of a state must be judged by a comprehensive, rather than a partial view. These reflections on the responsibilities of office lead him to remark that posts of eminence are not to be coveted, for in addition to the difficulty of discharging them aright, they often stimulate a restless ambition and involve much unprofitable outlay. Far happier therefore is the man who, having earned by industry his contented handful, can close his eyes without being disturbed by the anxious dreams of covetousness or ambition.

Here he again enlarges on the miseries which attend the lust of acquisition. A man, for instance, devotes the energy of years to the accumulation of wealth, while he denies himself everything that money can procure; and yet such is the uncertainty of his being able to retain what he has amassed, that he may at any time lose the whole through the artifice of a thief or the contrivances of treachery.

Thus the toil of a life may be suddenly frustrated, and the slave of avarice return to earth naked and penniless, and terminate a painful life by a dishonourable death. A state therefore of unsolicitous content is the only one that can be called truly happy, and he who by honest industry earns a sufficiency for himself, and something to spare for the exercise of benevolence to others, will enjoy the richest blessings that human labour can bestow,—Peace and Self-satisfaction. He next alludes to certain discontented objections that have been urged against the Divine government of the world. For instance, that some men, to whom Heaven has granted the means of enjoyment, appear to be kept continually toiling without ever reaping the fruits of their labours. On the contrary, their accumulations are perhaps inherited by a stranger, and they die without having realized that happiness which nevertheless seemed always within their reach; and is not this, saith the objector, attributable to some moral defect in the constitution of the world, whereby the attainment of happiness is denied to some, while it is accessible to others? Surely it were better not to have been born at all, than to be gifted with capacities for enjoyment without being granted the opportunity of exercising them. The case of the scientific man exhibits the same unsatisfactory aspect. The excursive impulse of the mind leads him to devote his life to learning and research, but yet he never seems to reach that limit, which is the sole object of his labours. So that the pursuit of Wisdom is little better than that of Folly as far as any solid satisfaction is concerned; and such being the case, it would seem more desirable to indulge the bodily eye on outward and sensible objects, than to be constantly straining the mental vision on abstract and unprofitable speculations. As an answer to these disordered reflections, he again exposes the folly of murmuring against the dispensations of the Almighty, who has doubtless ordered all things for the best, as will infallibly be proved in the end; and besides this consideration it may be truly alleged that men do not in most cases know what their real advantage is, and through their short-sightedness often pursue wrong objects. Thus many things which are commonly despised by the world may prove in reality most profitable and edifying: an honest name, for instance, more valuable than any outward ornament; the day of one's death more desirable than the day of one's birth; the fellowship of sorrow more improving than the intercourse of mirth; the praise of one man less worth having than the reproof of another. Thus man misapprehends the true value of things, because he cannot foresee consequences, and ascertain their bearings on his real happiness. Since therefore positive good may often lurk under apparent evil, Solomon reprehends precipitation in forming opinions, and urges the exercise of deliberation, patience and resignation as the best means of encountering the changes and chances of life. Such indeed are the attributes of a truly wise man, who relies not on his own superficial knowledge, but on the Wisdom that is from above; and who stands alike unmoved by the allurements of prosperity and the sufferings of adversity, because he is conscious that both estates



are dispensations of God, and that in the end it will be shown that one was made to counterbalance the other.

The frequent spectacle of Honesty unrequited and Fraud prosperous, he asserts, is a proof that justice is not to be looked for in the present world, and consequently in our dealings with each other we must take this into account and not be too exacting in our expectations. The known existence of fraud should keep us on our guard against imposition, without however provoking constant jealousy and suspicion. A middle course between a wily distrust and a foolish confidence is the best one to adopt. As sin infects all human nature, we must make allowances for the defects of others, and overlook petty injuries and disparagements in consideration of our own liability to similar frailties.

Having in vain endeavoured to account for the primary cause of all this admixture of good and evil, and found it beyond the powers of human investigation, he devoted his attention to the secondary causes of evil, by which the original germ is developed and increased. Assuming sin to be closely associated with ignorance and folly, his observations on female instability led him to the conclusion, that carnal appetite formed a connecting link between ignorance and vice, and was a fruitful source of wickedness, although its temptations are not absolutely insurmountable.

The progress again of human arts and inventions tends to swell the train of original sin, by developing new combinations of vanity; so that there is a conspiracy of both mind and body, by which the mystery of evil is propagated and increased. He concludes this subject, however, by asserting, that if man's capacity were sufficiently extensive to enable him to comprehend the whole of God's system, none of these things would cause apprehension; but that on the contrary, all difficulty would vanish, and distrust be replaced by cheerfulness and confidence.

He again enjoins submission to Kings, because they are to judge the people, and not the people them. Kings are amenable to God's judgment only; and, as they are exposed to the same accidents as other men on earth, so do their works await the same day of future retribution. The spectacle, therefore, of a bad king reigning in apparent prosperity, while better men often perish in obscurity, need be no stumbling-block to loyalty, nor be urged as an argument that sin will escape with impunity. For, according to the Divine arrangement, it is not till the next world that Virtue is to receive its full acknowledgment, and Vice its penalty. Sin is permitted here, and in the present solaces it offers, consists the trial and discipline of virtue; but one of the unsatisfactory consequences resulting from this permission is the prevalence of injustice and wrong; and Solomon acknowledges that while confining his views to this life alone, all this confusion and contrariety had led him formerly to take a wrong view of things, and to suppose that true happiness consisted in Mirth and Enjoyment; but, on taking a

more comprehensive view, and contemplating God's entire work, as it embraces the eternal destiny of man, all difficulty disappeared, and the doctrine of a future state of existence removed every objection founded on the present intermixture of good and evil.

Suppose this doctrine removed indeed, and what could be imagined more deplorable than the present aspect of things? Presuming, for the sake of argument, that death were the end of man's existence, what solution could be found to this moral paradox that would "justify the ways of God to man?" — for in this life God never seems to interpose in behalf of the righteous, or to evince any ostensible preference between the good and bad. His favour and hate are alike concealed beneath this visible screen of things. Similar accidents occur indiscriminately to all characters,—the just and unjust, the pure and impure, the religious and irreligious; and what could be more unsatisfactory than the thought, that such a system should be permanent? that life should be passed, as it often is, in wickedness or infatuation, and annihilation be the result? Were such indeed the case, and it were true that "there is no action, or reflection, or knowledge, or wisdom" beyond the grave, then responsibility and its restraints would be at an end; existence under any form would be invaluable, because, as the saying goes, "a live dog is better than a dead lion;" and the only resource left for men would be, to let loose the rein, and follow up every enjoyment for which they felt the inclination. Solomon, however, observes that even this miserable doctrine would be but a precarious consolation to the voluptuary, because pleasure is not always attainable, neither can success be counted upon in any undertaking, for the unforeseen accidents of life may intercept any scheme, or death frustrate all further expectation.

Having thus established the truth of the soul's accountableness in a future state, he proceeds to deliver some practical precepts. He comments on the present advantages of Wisdom, and mentions a remarkable instance of its efficacy in the case of a poor man, who, in a critical emergency, delivered his city from the hands of his enemies by the happy exercise of this valuable endowment. Thus, though wisdom when associated with poverty be often treated with contempt, it will nevertheless assert its dignity and power, and often shield its possessor more than any outward panoply. In the exercise of it, however, constant circumspection is necessary, because a trifling error in a wise man is long remembered, begets want of confidence, and prejudices much antecedent service.

He once more enjoins submission to the higher powers, and annexes a strong caution against rashly attempting to remedy abuses, which necessarily exist in every administration. He also hints at the danger of such experiments in highly figurative language, and then introduces a comparison between Wisdom and Folly, with the view probably of showing that it is to the latter that such treacherous aspersions are due, and that they originate from defect of judgment.



A land however undoubtedly suffers much from unworthy rulers, who neglect their duty and abandon themselves to a luxurious indolence; for Industry and Temperance in high places are the glory of a land. Negligence and sloth will indeed bring any structure to decay. Nevertheless it is not the part of the people to impeach their rulers, and the voice of treason, though uttered in secret, is often unaccountably brought to light and punished.

He now gives some advice to merchants, and recommends them not to commit all their goods to one vessel, but to distribute them in several, lest one untoward casualty involve them in ruin. Neither are they to regulate the times and seasons of enterprise by the superstitious conceits of divination, whose prognostications are empty and fictitious, and paralyse that promptness of action which is so essential in commercial undertakings. Augurers can no more anticipate the future, than they can comprehend the movements of the wind, or the mysteries of generation. Promptness, therefore, and perseverance are the only sure warrants of success.

He recommends in conclusion cheerfulness and a prepared readiness for adversity, which sooner or later may come upon all men. He admonishes youth that health, liveliness and energy are their proper attributes, and permits them to use all lawful enjoyment provided it be tempered and restrained by a constant remembrance of their Creator. He urges the shortness and uncertainty of life as a stimulus to early piety, and pictures old age and its attendant infirmities under the image of a ruinous mansion, deserted by its lively tenants. A figurative representation of death is annexed as a climax.

Finally, he mentions how, as his wisdom increased, he imparted it to others, and that his aim in teaching was to express sound truths in concise and agreeable style, having compiled them from various sources, and concentrated them afterwards into trite and pithy phraseology. He recommends his son to hearken to the admonition of wise counsellors, as more profitable than all abstract research, or the wearying and endless study of books.

He concludes by resolving all good counsel into one comprehensive maxim, "Fear God and keep His commandments," wherein is included the homage of the mind and the service of the body. A life thus spent is the only safe preparation against the day of Judgment, when all human actions and motives will receive their final reward.

THE BOOK OF SOLOMON

CALLLED

E C C L E S I A S T E S.



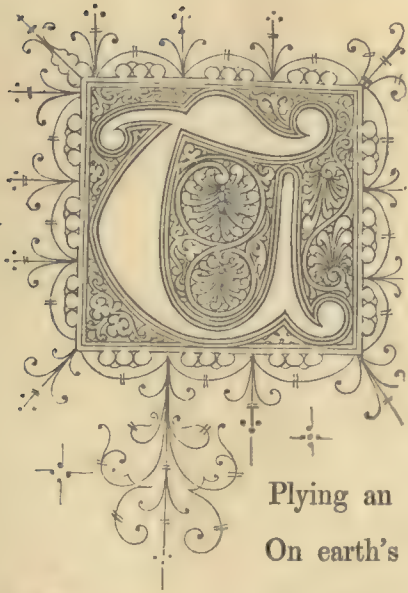


# ECCLESIASTES.

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## SECTION I.

THE VANITY OF EARTHLY THINGS.—THEIR MONOTONY AND ENDLESS RECURRENCE.—ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS FROM NATURAL PHENOMENA.—THE SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS OF MAN.—THE COURSE OF THE SUN.—THE MOTION OF THE WINDS AND WATERS.—AS THESE THINGS REVOLVE WITHOUT NOVELTY OR INTERMISSION, SO MAN CONTINUES IN HIS APPOINTED SPHERE WITHOUT THE POWER OF PRODUCING ANYTHING NEW.



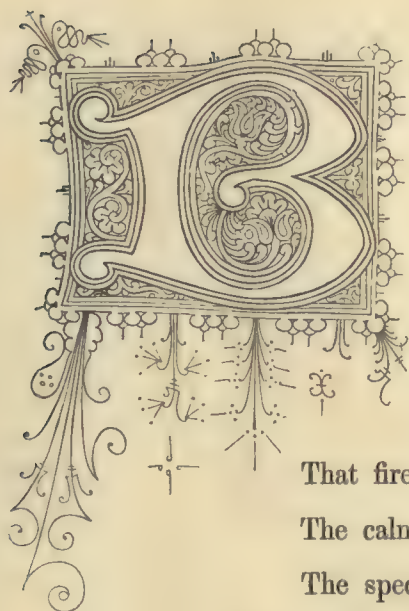
THE Preacher's meditations, David's son,  
Jerusalem's wise monarch, Solomon.—  
The world extends a vast and fruitless plain  
For man to toil upon, and toil in vain ;  
Nor use nor permanence his labours crown, 5  
From the sun's rising to its going down ;  
Race after race in staid succession rise,  
Plying an endless round of vanities,  
On earth's wide surface labour as they will,  
Its bulk remains unchanged, unvaried still, 10  
Created things a circling law pursue,  
Old combinations but recur anew ;  
Soon as the Sun its noon-day limit gains,  
It seeks again the occidental plains,



In endless circuit hastening to roll, 15  
And follow still an ever-shifting goal.  
The northern blast alike, through space fulfils  
Its revolutions tow'rd the southern hills,  
The subtle ether feels the impulse given  
And hurries ceaseless through the vault of heaven ; 20  
The ocean's exhalation feeds the rill  
That flows again its parent sea to fill ;  
The aqueous lymph its motion ne'er abates,  
But in a fixed rotation circulates.  
Thus all terrestrial things, whate'er they be, 25  
Maintain a restless vain activity.  
Events arise, they culminate and wane  
But to be reproduced in time again ;  
Things antecedent perished, as a tale,  
And future ones oblivion still shall veil ; 30  
Whatever has been will again be done,  
And nothing new exists beneath the sun.

## SECTION II.

THE UNSATISFACTORINESS OF HUMAN PURSUITS.—“THE DESIRABLE THING” FOR MAN NOT TO BE FOUND IN PHILOSOPHY OR SCIENCE.—WISDOM AS INEFFECTUAL AS FOLLY TO PROMOTE TRUE HAPPINESS.—OWING TO THE UNLIMITED FIELD IT PRESENTS, ITS PROSECUTION MUST END IN DISAPPOINTMENT.



Y speculations such as these impressed  
 To the great problem I applied the test,  
 And by philosophy and abstract lore 35  
 Pondered all human occupations o'er,  
 Their works, their arts, their science; but in vain  
 Sought I in these for the substantial gain.  
 The deep research of philosophic truth  
 That fires the eager intellect of youth, 40  
 The calmer studies of maturer age,  
 The speculations that absorb the sage,  
 To no conclusive object seemed to tend,  
 But, like the wind, in trackless deserts end;  
 None could the grand deficiency supply, 45  
 Or glut the cravings of man's atrophy.  
 And thus the sad conviction weighed my mind  
 That Wisdom and Philosophy combined,  
 With whatsoe'er advantages pursued,  
 Failed to elaborate the final good, 50



Nor could I great diversity detect  
Between excess, and want of intellect;  
Since Wisdom's depths unfathomable lie,  
And Folly shoots her arrows aimlessly.  
By neither are we led to realize  
Wherein man's permanent advantage lies;  
Nay, sages' toils are spared the fool and sloth,  
While disappointment crowns the aims of both.

## SECTION III.

MIRTH AND ENJOYMENT EQUALLY UNSATISFACTORY—THE ONE A SPECIES OF MORAL MADNESS,  
AND THE OTHER UTTERLY UNPROFITABLE.



OILED in researches such as Science yields,  
My object I pursued in gayer fields.  
My mind I challenged to refresh with mirth  
And drink the teeming luxuries of earth;  
But, while in blandishments of pleasure drowned,  
Dissatisfaction still my labours crowned.

60

To Laughter I exclaimed, "Thou'rt thoughtless, mad!"  
To Mirth, "Thou fail'st to make me truly glad."

65



## SECTION IV.

HAPPINESS NOT TO BE FOUND EVEN IN THE UNION OF THE TWO EXTREMES MIRTH AND PHILOSOPHY.—THE VARIOUS MEANS OF PLEASURE WHICH SOLOMON ACCUMULATED WITH THE VIEW OF TESTING ALL THE RESOURCES OF LIFE.—DISAPPOINTMENT THE RESULT.



INCE Mirth nor Science, when pursued apart,  
 Could sate the eager cravings of the heart,  
 Methought, though, isolated, either fail,  
 Their combination haply may avail. 70  
 With gladd'ning wine I filled the glowing vein,  
 And ope'd the lists to Folly's motley train,  
 Pursuing still my philosophic toil,  
 And nurturing the plant in either soil;  
 Expecting by this union to find 75  
 The climacterick of the human mind.

My works I amplified, stretched my domains,  
 With fruitful vineyards fertilized the plains,  
 Diversified with gay parterres the ground,  
 And trees of various beauty reared around; 80  
 At hand refreshing reservoirs I made,  
 That to the soil a liquid food conveyed,—  
 Vassals I hire subservient to my will,  
 And with a goodly crowd my household fill.



VASSALS I HIRE SUBSERVIENT TO MY WILL,  
AND WITH A GOODLY CROWD MY HOUSEHOLD FILL.





My flocks and herds I straightway multiplied, 85  
Whose numbers all Jerusalem outvied;  
The earth, for me unbosomed, shed her store,  
And poured profuse her vein of golden ore;  
I got me gems, and eke all precious things,  
Treasures of palaces and pride of kings, 90  
In music disciplined a choral throng  
To wake the cheering luxury of song,  
While captive beauty, offspring of the fray,  
Gladdened with smiles the leisure of the day.  
Thus mounted on the pinnacle of fame, 95  
In station opulent, and great in name,  
Of all fair Zion's proud ancestral host  
I stood alone, the glory and the boast;  
By Wisdom fortified, whose sober rays  
Guided imagination's devious ways,— 100  
And lifted thus on fortune's ample tide,  
Whate'er my eye did lust, my wealth supplied.  
Resolved from nothing gladsome to refrain,  
To free enjoyment I relaxed the rein,  
Seeking those pleasures nature doth dispense 105  
As human labour's lawful recompense.  
But when I turned and thoughtfully surveyed  
My works of toil on every side displayed,  
They seemed unsatisfying as the wind,  
And promised still to leave a blank behind. 110



## SECTION V.

THE SUPERIORITY OF WISDOM AS A MORAL ARMOUR, OVER FOLLY.—THE EQUAL LIABILITY OF BOTH TO FATE AND ACCIDENT A MELANCHOLY REFLECTION.—DEATH, VIEWED IN THE ABSTRACT, HAS A TENDENCY TO MAKE ALL LABOUR APPEAR UNPROFITABLE.—THE UNCERTAINTY THAT EXISTS AS TO THE CHARACTER OF ONE'S SUCCESSOR, UNSATISFACTORY.—THE FRUITS OF INDUSTRY OR SCIENCE MAY BE INHERITED BY THE WORTHLESS.—THE SUPPOSITION, THAT GOD CONSIGNS TO THE GOOD THE LABOURS OF THE BAD, NO CLEAR SOLUTION OF THIS DIFFICULTY, BECAUSE IT INVOLVES THE MYSTERIOUS SUBJECT OF GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE.



THUS I concluded it was vain to try  
 To couple Folly with Philosophy,  
 Since all the wealth whereof a king's possessed  
 Had been applied to verify the test;  
 And what succeeding theorist could more 115  
 Effect than that which I had done before?  
 Yet this conviction did my labours yield,  
 That Ignorance is shamed in Wisdom's field,  
 And that as light the darkness doth outvie,  
 So Folly shrinks before Philosophy; 120  
 For reason's armour may protect the wise,  
 Whereas a fool still walks with closèd eyes;  
 But here again the difficulty lay,  
 That both alike must yield to Death's dark day,  
 And though intelligence may guide the helm, 125  
 The wise and fool one doom must overwhelm—







ALAS THE VANITY OF EARTHLY THINGS!  
SINCE TIME ALL RANKS TO ONE BASE LEVEL BRINGS.

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So I exclaimed, "Vain are my labours spent  
"In Wisdom's cause, since fate and accident  
"Twixt fool and learned no distinction know;  
"What profit therefore can my knowledge show?" 130  
Alas the vanity of earthly things!  
Since time all ranks to one base level brings,  
And dark oblivion blots from memory's page  
Alike the brief career of fool and sage.  
Thus sadly musing on the intrinsic worth 135  
Of man's career and destiny on earth,  
I hated life, for profitless appeared,  
And vain, each work by human labour reared.  
This sad reflection, too, enhanced my care,  
Provoking the hard refuge of despair, 140  
That a survivor all my toils should own,  
Lord of my coffers, master of my throne;  
Whose untold promise might betray its trust  
Or work dishonour on my sleeping dust.  
To know the issue, Providence denies; 145  
Thus fools may mock the labours of the wise,  
And industry to worthlessness consign  
The hard-earned treasures of her golden mine.—  
The veiled face of nature to unmask  
The slave of science plies his live-long task; 150  
Deep contemplation occupies his brain,  
And each result is earned with laboured pain.  
The fretful mind, by keen research oppressed,  
Denies him nature's universal rest;



His energies unstrung, his soul o'erwrought, 155  
Death intercepts the meed too dearly bought,  
While his successor claims the unearned spoil,  
Unworthily enriched by others' toil.  
Thus sore perplexed, methought 'twere wiser far  
To count that all things pre-ordainèd are, 160  
And that the gifts of life, (though poor at best,  
And unsubstantial still where most possessed,)  
Are granted to the good by Heaven's decree,  
As God's sure pledge to virtuous industry;  
While to the bad the penance is assigned 165  
Of heaping treasures, but to be resigned.

## SECTION VI.

THE TRUE VIEW OF THINGS ANNOUNCED.—MAN'S TIMES AND SEASONS ALL OVERRULED FOR HIS GOOD BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT.—THE LESSER ACCIDENTS OF LIFE, AS WELL AS THE GREATER, SUBJECT TO GOD'S PRE-ORDINATION.—MAN'S DUTY LIES IN CHEERFUL ACQUIESCENCE, AND IMPARTING GOOD TO OTHERS.—THE PERMISSION OF WRONG AND INJUSTICE IN THE WORLD, AN ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF A FUTURE ADJUSTMENT.—MAN'S IMMORTALITY CANNOT BE INFERRED FROM HIS APPARENT SUPERIORITY TO OTHER ANIMALS.—HIS BODY SUBJECT TO THE SAME ACCIDENTS WITH THEM.—THE NATURE OF HIS SOUL ONLY DISCOVERABLE BY REVELATION. MERE ENJOYMENT THE BEST THING IF DEATH WERE THE END OF EXISTENCE.—A FUTURE STATE BEST INFERRED FROM ITS NECESSITY, IN ORDER THAT DIVINE JUSTICE MAY BE VINDICATED.—OTHERWISE ANNIHILATION WOULD BE MORE DESIRABLE TO MANY THAN LIFE.



STATED period the Immortal One  
 Appoints to every work beneath the sun ;  
 At His decree the infant draws its breath,  
 Erewhile a punctual sacrifice to death :  
 Nor less the forest child its season knows,  
 Breaks into life and blossoms to its close.  
 By Him o'erruled the healing art is blest,

170

Or fails to lull the aching sense to rest ;  
 He sets a time to build, and to destroy,  
 To harbour grief or cherish honest joy.

175

Regret's keen pangs, that force the mourner's tear,  
 At stated times chastise man's brief career,  
 The breeze of mercy wafts the clouds away  
 And mirth inaugurates her cheerful day.

180



The appetites controlled, their vigils keep,  
 Or rouse to action, or inertly sleep;  
 E'en avarice withholds her eager hand,  
 Softened to mercy by Divine command.  
 The lesser accidents alike obey 185  
 The rule of Deity's controlling sway.  
 The stimulus that prompts each keen desire  
 Bates at His will its intermittent fire.  
 The tongue, subservient to its Maker's will,  
 Touched by His Spirit speaketh or is still. 190  
 Affection's social ties are weaved above,  
 Emphatic foretaste of eternal love;  
 While hate is granted an allotted reign,  
 Premonitory type of endless pain.  
 War's fearful issues, true to Wisdom's end, 195  
 Th' angelic policy of peace commend.  
 Each has its season, each its destined use,  
 While all to the Creator's praise conduce.—  
 "What profit then hath man," th' objector cries,  
 "If bound by such ordained subserviencies? 200  
 "Or what ulterior gain to him accrues  
 "Who actively the path of toil pursues?"  
 But whence the cavil? 'tis enough for man  
 To trust the perfectness of that vast plan  
 Whereof he forms a part; and thus resigned, 205  
 Each honest task its recompense shall find.  
 For God hath planted in the human breast  
 For present things an ever active zest,

That predisposes gladly to fulfil  
 Both man's apparent, and God's actual will; 210  
 So that no better motive can control,  
 No worthier object satisfy, the soul,  
 Than this—to use for philanthropic ends  
 The means which Providence to all extends;  
 And whatsoever good we thus impart 215  
 To prosecute with cheerfulness of heart.  
 For what alternative to man remains  
 Than to enjoy the guerdon of his pains?  
 Helpless the laws of nature to reverse  
 Or stay His hand who guides the Universe, 220  
 Howe'er he act, time's revolutions last,  
 God still demands recurrence of the past.—  
 But this again I saw beneath the sun,  
 To the oppressed and wronged injustice done,  
 Unrighteousness installed in Honour's seat, 225  
 And Worthlessness with Honesty compete;  
 Wherefore I said: "Doubtless 'tis planned on High  
 "Such inequalities to rectify;  
 "God will both judge the wicked, and dispense  
 "To righteousness a future recompense." 230  
 That retribution, though prorogued, impends,  
 And forms a part of the Almighty's ends,  
 I clearly gathered, from the fact that here  
 Such imperfections and misdeeds appear,  
 Allowed in this probationary state 235  
 Till strict adjustment all re-integrate,



When ev'ry work and action shall be shown  
To have involved a sequence of its own.—

Now some assert that this great truth may be  
Inferred from man's exclusive dignity,

240

That his immortal destiny is seen  
Both in his inward soul and outward mien,  
Distinguishing by their united voice  
The creature of the Almighty's special choice—

But with myself I argued 'tis not so,

245

Conclusions drawn from what we see below,  
And irrespective of a future state,

Tend rather to degrade than elevate;

Regarded thus, small difference can we trace

'Twixt men and creatures of a lower race;

250

By chance and accident alike controlled,

Men with the beasts a common station hold;

Instinct alike with life's electric breath,

Alike subservient to unerring death,

Identical in origin and end,

255

Sprung from the dust, with dust again to blend,

A common fate rules their departure hence,

And mocks at man's usurped pre-eminence.

And if such truths his outward aspect teach,

The inward part extends beyond his reach,

260

Th' inspirèd mind alone can e'er unroll

The deep mysterious archives of the soul,

Rapt to proclaim th' immortal spirit's flight

To upward regions of eternal light,



RAPT TO PROCLAIM TH' IMMORTAL SPIRIT'S FLIGHT  
TO UPWARD REGIONS OF ETERNAL LIGHT.





While baser creatures yield life's subtle ray, 265  
Ne'er to retrace the precincts of the day.—

Thus I concluded that man's outward state  
Failed his eventual doom to indicate,  
And, that regarded thus, no better plan  
Remained, than to enjoy life's mortal span, 270  
And, while unconscious of remoter aims,  
To reap the profit honest labour claims,  
Since none the dark hereafter could reveal,  
Or promise aught beyond his present weal.

So I returned to contemplate again 275  
The unequal sorrows of the sons of men;  
And straight Affliction's bitter cry arose,  
Wrung from the victim of Oppression's woes;  
I marked the helpless trampled on by might,  
And none at hand to comfort or requite, 280  
And this I judged the most conclusive test  
Of Future Retribution;—else more blest  
Were they who share annihilation's sleep  
Than those who wake to suffer and to weep;  
Nay, I had e'en pronounced most blest the state 285  
Of dark nonentity, exempt from fate,  
Exempt from all the evil deeds that shame  
Creation and the great Creator's name.



## SECTION VII.

A MIDDLE COURSE RECOMMENDED, BETWEEN AN ANXIOUS INDUSTRY STIMULATED BY ENVY, AND  
A RECKLESS EXTRAVAGANCE, WHICH IS THE RESULT OF SLOTH.



I'VE seen that oft to jealousy is due  
 The toil of those who industry pursue, 290  
 That much of man's successful enterprise  
 Springs from the value in his neighbour's eyes;  
 And this methought unworthy of mankind,  
 An empty aim, a feeding upon wind.  
 Nor less debased the sloth; who folds his hands, 295  
 Reckless of what his future need demands;  
 Who straight consumes his patrimonial pelf,  
 And as it were devours his very self.

Far happier he who holds the golden mean  
 Extravagance and Avarice between, 300  
 Who, on no ill-directed labours bent,  
 Enjoys the quiet handful of content,  
 For trouble haunts the over-anxious mind,  
 And idleness, privation's sting shall find.



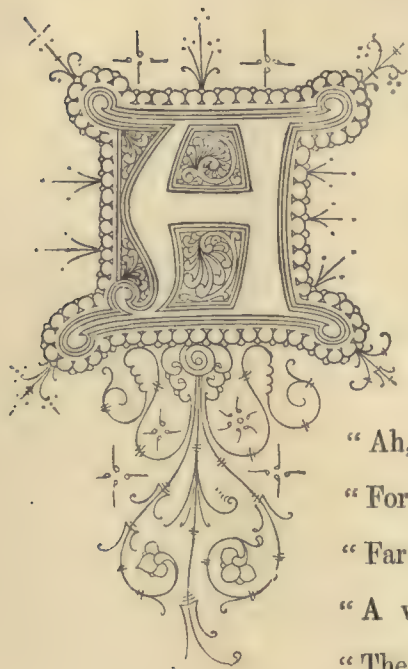




THE FAITHFUL HELPMATE, TRUE TO WISDOM'S PLAN,  
TEMPERS THE SPIRIT, SOOTHES THE CARES OF MAN.

## SECTION VIII.

THE SOLITARY MISER A REBEL AGAINST GOD'S SOCIAL LAWS.—THE ADVANTAGES OF MARRIAGE.



GAIN I turned, new vanities to scan, 305

And marked the sordid, solitary man,  
Devoid of kin, estranged from social ties,  
Whom acquisition never satisfies,  
But still his endless task he prosecutes,  
Though none may taste or share the golden fruits.

"Ah, thankless toil! employment vain!" I cried,

"For what hast thou life's best delights denied?

"Far from the joys of kindred and of home,

"A visionary aim hath made thee roam;

"The charm of social intercourse was given, 315

"The best endowment to mankind from Heaven,

"When the Creator spake from Heaven's throne:

"'It is not good for man to be alone.'"

For two may lighten mutual toil and care,

While one alone will languish in despair. 320

Friendship may rob Affliction of its dart,

And fill with warmth and hope the drooping heart.

The faithful helpmate, true to Wisdom's plan,

Tempers the spirit, soothes the cares of man;

And should a pledge of love the union bless, 325

The triple cord gives strength and happiness.

## SECTION IX.

THE VANITY OF COURTING POPULAR FAVOUR.—THE FICKLENESS OF THE MULTITUDE.



TURNED another vanity to see—  
 The fickle breath of popularity ;  
 I heard the crowd their reigning king malign,  
 Intent his tried renown to undermine. 330  
 “Better,” cried they, “a youth the land should rule,  
 “Than one whom time and age hath made a fool.  
 “The heir of poverty, of bondsmen born,  
 “If wise disarms hereditary scorn,  
 “And claims a people’s homage more than he 335  
 “Whose mind is wasted by infirmity.”

Thus spake the wayward and disloyal throng,  
 Alive to novelty and fancied wrong ;  
 In change imaginary good they sought,  
 Still discontented when the change was wrought. 340  
 Eager the reigning monarch to replace,  
 In his successor every hope they trace ;  
 While their posterity, inconstant still,  
 With murmurs new the legislature fill.



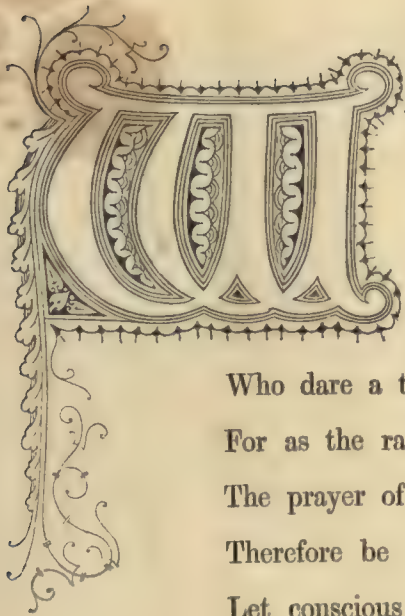




WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY IN THE HOUSE OF PRAYER  
IN HONOUR TO THY GOD ENSHRINED THERE.

## SECTION X.

REVERENCE AND RECOLLECTION THE PROPER ADJUNCTS OF WORSHIP.—A CAUTION AGAINST INCONSIDERATE OATHS.—PREMEDITATION NECESSARY IN ALL ACTS OF RELIGION.



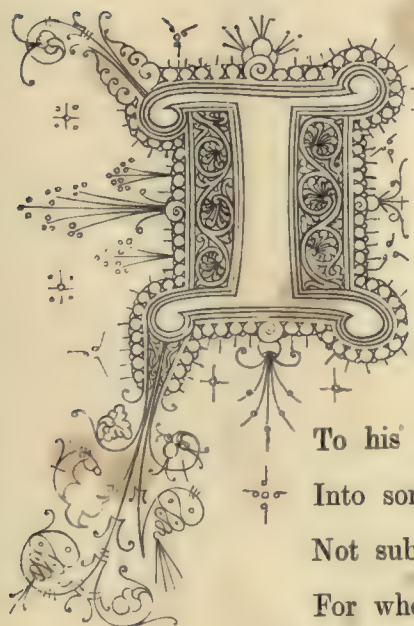
WALK circumspectly in the house of prayer 345  
 In honour to thy God enshrined there ;  
 Remember that to hearken and obey  
 Excels the sacrifice the wicked pay.  
 Surely all they through ignorance must err  
 Who dare a thoughtless tribute to prefer, 350  
 For as the ramblings of a dreamer's brain  
 The prayer of fools abounds with fancies vain.  
 Therefore be tardy with thy song of praise,  
 Let conscious penitence devotion raise.  
 God dwells in Heaven, then ponder ere you pray ; 355  
 Thou'rt but the tenant of a house of clay.—  
 If thou to God a holy vow hast made,  
 Let not its due performance be delayed.  
 Procrastination, the resource of fools,  
 Entails neglect of all religion's rules ; 360  
 Then pay thy vow, or safer 'twere for thee  
 Thou'dst never vowed, than vowing perjured be.



But failing, seek not to disguise th' offence  
Beneath the veil of plausible pretence;  
Deceive not him who comes thine alms to claim, 365  
By giving thine intent another name,  
As though, by inconsiderate haste betrayed,  
In oversight thy solemn vow were made;  
Why should thy tongue contaminate thy soul?—  
A part so trivial implicate the whole? 370  
Provoke not then with heedless words the rod,  
Nor tempt the deep forbearance of thy God;  
For though a licence to the tongue be given  
In earthly intercourse; in that of Heaven,  
Premeditation must thy speech restrain, 375  
The fear of God control expressions vain.

## SECTION XI.

SUBORDINATION TO RULERS INCULCATED.—THE CONDITION OF A STATE TO BE JUDGED BY A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW.—THE KING NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE ERRORS IN GOVERNMENT.



T' Scandals in a province thou discern,  
 The poor oppressed, and justice hard to earn,  
 Be not surprised; nor indignation vent  
 'Gainst him who holds the reins of Government;  
 For various grades of power compose the state,  
 Each in his rank and place subordinate  
 To his superior; and abuses may  
 Into some parts and functions find their way  
 Not subject to the king's express control, 385  
 For who could guide the details of the whole?

As well might each possessor of the soil  
 Dispense with those who serve him with their toil,  
 As he who occupies the regal throne  
 Attempt the complex government alone. 390  
 Nor should a state's condition and degree  
 Be judged from partial evils that we see;  
 Its general rule and management will best  
 Its excellences or defects attest.

## SECTION XII.

THE EMPTINESS OF PAGEANTRY.—THE PURSUIT OF WEALTH ANXIOUS AND UNCERTAIN.—THE MISERY  
OF AVARICE.—CONTENTMENT AND BENEVOLENCE THE TRUE HAPPINESS OF MAN.



S silver fails the miser's lust to sate, 395

But rather doth his craving stimulate,

So idle pageantry's unmeaning train

Deludes its lord with expectations vain.

The glittering retinue that nobles prize

Yields satisfaction only to the eyes— 400

Increase of vassals brings increase of cost,

And where's the profit for the substance lost?

Far happier he whose unambitious breast

No prurient appetite beguiles of rest.

Lo' the sweet sleep of Labour's hardy son! 405

The dreamless trance of the contented one!

But riches, still pursued with eager eyes,

Nature's oblivious opiate neutralize.

For this sore evil 'neath the sun I've seen,

Where wealth by years of thrift hath hoarded been; 410

Th' ill-fated treasure, painfully amassed,

Betrays its owner's cherished hopes at last.



The glittering prize, a stealthy miscreant's prey,  
 'Neath night's dark mantle is conveyed away,  
 Or treachery with unperceived design 415  
 Invades by stratagem the golden mine.  
 Such swift reverse I've seen to overtake  
 The slave who bartered life for riches' sake ;  
 Naked as when first ushered into light,  
 Naked he seeks again the shades of night, 420  
 His offspring destitute, himself the heir  
 Of naught but death and pitiless despair.  
 Ah thankless issue of a life of toil !  
 How vain the work that one mishap may foil !  
 The parsimonious drudgery of years, 425  
 The day of labour, and the night of fears ;  
 The dark pursuit of an uncertain aim,  
 Each petty failure's peevishness and shame ;  
 All profitless, unstable as the wind,  
 The useless penance of a morbid mind. 430  
 What, then, I judge both good and excellent  
 Was this—an unsolicitous content,  
 Joined with the satisfaction that proceeds  
 From wide Benevolence' laborious deeds ;  
 Freely to quaff life's cup, but not alone, 435  
 As though its overflowings were our own ;  
 For toil's true profit, rightly understood,  
 Is its capacity of doing good,  
 And thus to occupy existence' span,  
 Enriching and enriched, the aim of man— 440

For he to whom such means are amply given  
May recognise therein the gift of Heaven ;  
Cheering the merciful with Mercy's grace,  
That he may joyful run his mortal race.  
Such efforts, then, let no delay impede  
To mock the good intention's honest speed,  
For few and brief are life's appointed days,  
And the Omniscient One his path surveys,  
Who will a sense of peace and joy impart,  
Soft, heavenly echoes in an upright heart.

445

450

## SECTION XIII.

THE MEANS OF HAPPINESS SOMETIMES POSSESSED WITHOUT BEING REALIZED.—THE SLAVE OF WEALTH AN INSTANCE OF THIS, AS WELL AS THE SLAVE OF SCIENCE.—THE FAULT CHARGEABLE TO MAN AND NOT TO GOD, WHO ORDERS ALL THINGS FOR THE BEST.—MAN'S SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS OFTEN LEADS HIM TO PURSUE WRONG OBJECTS.—THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE FUTURE.—THE IMPROVING USES OF SORROW COMPARED WITH THOSE OF MIRTH.—BLAME SOMETIMES PREFERABLE TO PRAISE.—THE ADVANTAGES OF PATIENCE AND RESIGNATION TO THE WILL OF GOD.



ET speculation here may interpose,

And this objection to God's rule propose :—

“ In this world's government it oft occurs

“ That wealth and honours largely He confers

“ On one whose lot and destiny it is

455

“ Ne'er to enjoy his superfluities ;—

“ Though lacking nought abundance can supply,

“ Th' implied fruition Heav'n doth still deny ;

“ Fraught with continual toil his life below,

“ The lavished means of bliss their end forego ;

460

“ A stranger grasps the accumulated gains,

“ And reaps the golden harvest of his pains.

“ Such consequence some moral ill betrays

“ In man's condition ; that throughout his days,

“ With substance ample, but a craving mind,

465

“ To present joys still loth to be resigned,



“ He should prolong a dull and useless race  
“ Till death his name from mortal rolls efface.  
“ E’en though for such a teeming issue smile,  
“ Nor wealth nor offspring may his cares beguile ; 470  
“ Th’ insatiate lust of acquisition cloy  
“ The full beatitude of proffered joys—  
“ No hallowed deeds immortalize his name,  
“ His useless life entails a death of shame,  
“ A death more dark than that which shrouds in gloom 475  
“ Th’ untimely birth’s unknown, unhonoured tomb ;  
“ Nay, since th’ abortive issue comes in vain,  
“ Of joy unconscious, and untried in pain,  
“ Securely courts nonentity’s abyss,  
“ Nor dares the touch of life’s electric kiss,— 480  
“ Knows not the sun, nor tastes existence’ woes,  
“ Cradled in blank oblivion’s dark repose,—  
“ More blest is such exemption, than the sense  
“ And means of bliss, without the experience ;  
“ For though prosperity’s unworthy heir 485  
“ Prolong his term of avarice and care,  
“ Death’s consummating stroke must come at last  
“ And shed a gloomy mantle o’er the past,  
“ Leaving no posthumous award of fame  
“ To gild his isolated, thankless name ; 490  
“ Death still consigning to a common tomb  
“ The heir of wealth, and fate’s untimely womb.—  
“ Nor less disquietude the labours yield  
“ Of him who toils in Science’ endless field ;

“ For, as the body’s appetite, renewed 495

“ By daily waste, still craves perpetual food,

“ So the insatiate ardour of the mind

“ No climacterick in research can find ;

“ Thus in the satisfaction of its aims

“ Wisdom no vantage over Folly claims— 500

“ The indigent may strive in Science’ cause,

“ Yet never taste abundance or applause,

“ Nor find enjoyment, nor discern a goal

“ To bound th’ excursive impulse of the soul.

“ Th’ æsthetic element indulges more 505

“ Man’s present state than speculative lore,

“ And better ’twere to feast the outward eyes

“ Than fret the mind with abstract vanities.”—

Such charges infidelity may vent

Wherewith t’ impugn God’s righteous government. 510

Ah! vain attempt to judge th’ all-judging Mind!

For He to each his station has assigned,

And by His mighty Prescience apprehends

All human actions, aims, conditions, ends.

And who this complicated maze shall thread? 515

What tongue implead the universal Head?

Where none can alter, none may wisely blame;

Objection but involves defeat and shame.

Again, how oft the things which men pursue

Cheat when attained the antecedent view, 520

Or foster vanity, and prurient thirst

For higher stimulants than pleased at first;

Man, to his true advantage ever blind,  
 Sees not each consequence that lurks behind,  
 Nor can the best estate a shelter yield, 525  
 This transient life from accident to shield.  
 For who fate's lurking issues e'er can know?  
 Calamity's dark advent who foreshow?

Again, by men intent on present good,  
 Apparent ills are oft misunderstood; 530  
 Yet things they deprecate, or lightly prize,  
 May richer prove than earthly merchandise.  
 Better an honest and unsullied name,  
 Than costliest unguents, or a noble's fame;  
 Yea, more propitious death's unwelcome day, 535  
 Than that which dawned on life's primeval ray.  
 More profitable grief's funereal wail,  
 Than festive shouts at luxury's regale;  
 The contemplation of man's common doom,  
 May train the heart to sanctify the tomb; 540  
 Thus wise men shun not the abode of grief,  
 Though fools resort to mirth's unsure relief.  
 Better to heed the sage's keen rebuke,  
 Than feed on Flattery's obsequious look:  
 For as the incensèd thorn's hysteric blaze, 545  
 So is the servile minion's hollow praise,  
 That mocks with truant lips the honest heart,  
 And wounds more keenly than th' oppressor's dart.

A hasty judgment prudently suspend,  
 Nor from beginnings trace a doubtful end, 550





THE CONTEMPLATION OF MAN'S COMMON DOOM,  
MAY TRAIN THE HEART TO SANCTIFY THE TOMB.

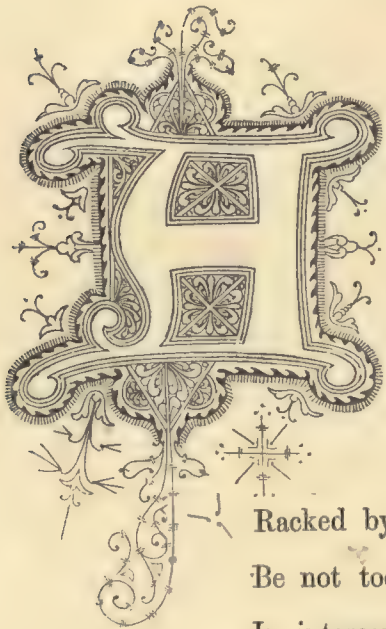


For human estimates oft miss their aim,  
And good may lurk where mortals idly blame.  
Then safer he, whose spirit patience rules ;  
Vexation rankles in the breast of fools ;  
And he, whom no reverse can tempt to chide, 555  
Espouseth still the safer, happier side.  
For what though Wisdom when with Wealth combined  
Jointly impart a solace to the mind—  
Let but mischance thy substance seize, and where  
Canst thou detect a refuge from despair, 560  
Save in those deep resources Wisdom gives ?  
Whose treasure, Wealth and Time and All outlives.  
Then contemplate with will resigned the plan  
Which the Almighty hath appointed man.  
Ne'er to thy superficial knowledge trust, 565  
For none God's dispensations can adjust.  
Abide in righteousness, if fortune smile,  
Nor let adversity thy trust beguile ;  
Since God a counterbalance hath assigned  
For all the chances that befall mankind, 570  
Mysteriously connecting joy with pain,  
That none His dispensations might arraign.



## SECTION XIV.

JUSTICE NOT TO BE LOOKED FOR IN THE PRESENT WORLD.—OUR DEALINGS WITH OTHERS NOT TO BE CONDUCTED IN A SPIRIT OF OVER-SUSPICION ON THE ONE HAND, OR OF FOOLISH CONFIDENCE ON THE OTHER.—PETTY SLANDERS TO BE DISREGARDED.—THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF EVIL BEYOND HUMAN INVESTIGATION.—ITS DEVELOPMENT TRACED THROUGH SECONDARY CAUSES.—SIN FOSTERED BY IGNORANCE, FOLLY, AND CARNAL PASSION.—FEMALE INSTABILITY.—THE PROGRESS OF ART AND INVENTION.—WERE GOD'S WHOLE SYSTEM REVEALED TO MAN, CONFIDENCE AND CHEERFULNESS WOULD REPLACE ALL APPREHENSIONS CONCERNING THE MYSTERY OF EVIL.



GAIN I marked two cases, that combined  
 To fill with doubts the unreflecting mind,—  
 The just man perishing, in justice' spite, 575  
 The fool prolonging a career of blight.  
 Then look not here for equity; still less  
 Thyself undue sagacity profess  
 In probing human frailty, lest thou die  
 Racked by Suspicion's sleepless jealousy. 580  
 Be not too wily, nor yet fondly blind,  
 In intercourse and dealings with mankind;  
 Where fraud exists, the simple-hearted may  
 To stratagems insidious fall a prey.  
 Still over either course maintain command, 585  
 For both extremes the godly will withstand.  
 To him whom Wisdom's tutelage doth guide,  
 This maxim will be clearly verified,—

Attested by the tried experience  
Of those who legislative rule dispense,— 590  
That none exist who justice ne'er forego,  
And sin contaminates all here below ;  
Yet though alive to man's avowed defects,  
Heed not what slander utters or suspects ;  
Still less attend to the unwary tongue 595  
That spreads reports amid thy household throng,  
Remembering that thou dost often vent  
In idle moments like disparagement.

All this admixture, then, of good and ill,  
By deep research, and philosophic skill, 600  
I closely tested, with the futile hope  
Of grasping truths removed from human scope ;  
For Evil's origin too distant lay  
To catch the feeble gleam of Reason's ray.

I therefore turned myself to ascertain 605  
How secondary causes swell the train  
Of that primeval element of sin,  
Whence all mankind's obliquities begin :  
How Wickedness from Ignorance proceeds,  
And Folly paves the way to vicious deeds. 610  
And this I found—that carnal appetite,  
Than death more baneful, often doth excite  
The pregnant lust inherent, and seduce  
The heart to purposes of vicious use.  
A fatal snare t' enthral th' unwary soul, 615  
But whose enticements godly men control.

That carnal passion's various artifice  
 Acts as a link 'twixt Ignorance and Vice  
 I ascertained by laying fact to fact,  
 Whereby alone man's reason can compact 620  
 A solid theory; and what I sought  
 With diligent and long observant thought,  
 I failed to find;—not in a thousand fair,  
 Was Virtue's saintly grace enshrined there;  
 In man alone the rare proportion held; 625  
 So hardly Nature's impulses are quelled.—

Another secondary cause of ill  
 I traced in Art's elaborative skill.  
 Invention's progress, fruitful to devise  
 A complicated maze of vanities, 630  
 Lures to degrade that primal rectitude  
 Wherewith God's workmanship was erst imbued.—  
 Thus mind and body jointly do combine  
 To mar and frustrate purposes Divine.  
 And yet could one be found whose eagle eye 635  
 Could compass the entire mystery,—  
 Trace evil to its origin and end,  
 And God's vast system wholly comprehend,—  
 Such knowledge would the filmy vision clear,  
 And cheerfulness replace each lingering fear; 640  
 Appointments all of wise design would tell,  
 And confidence and joy perpetual dwell.



## SECTION XV.

OBEDIENCE TO KINGS INCULCATED, WHO ARE AMENABLE TO GOD'S JUDGMENT ONLY.—DEATH AND RETRIBUTION THE LOT OF ALL.—THE PRESENT IMPUNITY OF EVIL RULERS NO ARGUMENT AGAINST A FUTURE ACCOUNT.—THE INDUCEMENTS OF SIN FORM THE TRIAL OF VIRTUE.—THE INJUSTICE AND CONTRARIETIES ABOUNDING IN THE PRESENT WORLD APT TO MISLEAD SUPERFICIAL OBSERVERS.—THE SOLUTION ONLY TO BE FOUND IN THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE.—THE MELANCHOLY ASPECT OF THINGS WITHOUT THIS DOCTRINE.—THE DIVINE LOVE OR HATE UNDISCOVERABLE IN THE EVENTS OF LIFE.—THE LIABILITY OF ALL MEN TO THE ACCIDENTS OF FATE.—ANNIHILATION AFTER DEATH WOULD ARGUE A DEFECTIVE GOVERNMENT.—THE HORRORS OF SUCH A DESTINY, AND THE PRESENT RECKLESSNESS THAT WOULD ENSUE.—THE CASUALTIES TO WHICH HUMAN NATURE IS SUBJECT FRUSTRATE THE SCHEMES OF THE VOLUPTUARY, SO THAT EVEN PRESENT HAPPINESS CANNOT BE SECURED BY THE RECKLESS.



COUNSEL thee—to keep the King's command,  
And monarchs—by their solemn oath to stand.

Let no disloyal impulse bid thee fly 645

The presence-chambers, with an evil eye.

Let not dark treason rankle in thy heart,

Nor in rebellious counsels take a part ;

'Tis not for thee to gainsay or dispute

The word of him whose will is absolute. 650

The godly man in kings no error sees,

But still ignores such acts as fail to please,

Conscious that He who ruleth over all

Will one day judge whatever here befall.

For each man's work involves a final doom,

655

And dark disasters in perspective loom ;

Nor is the king exempt, since equal fate  
Unseen, unknown, attends the mean and great ;  
No human eye foresees the final blow  
That lays each victim of corruption low. 660

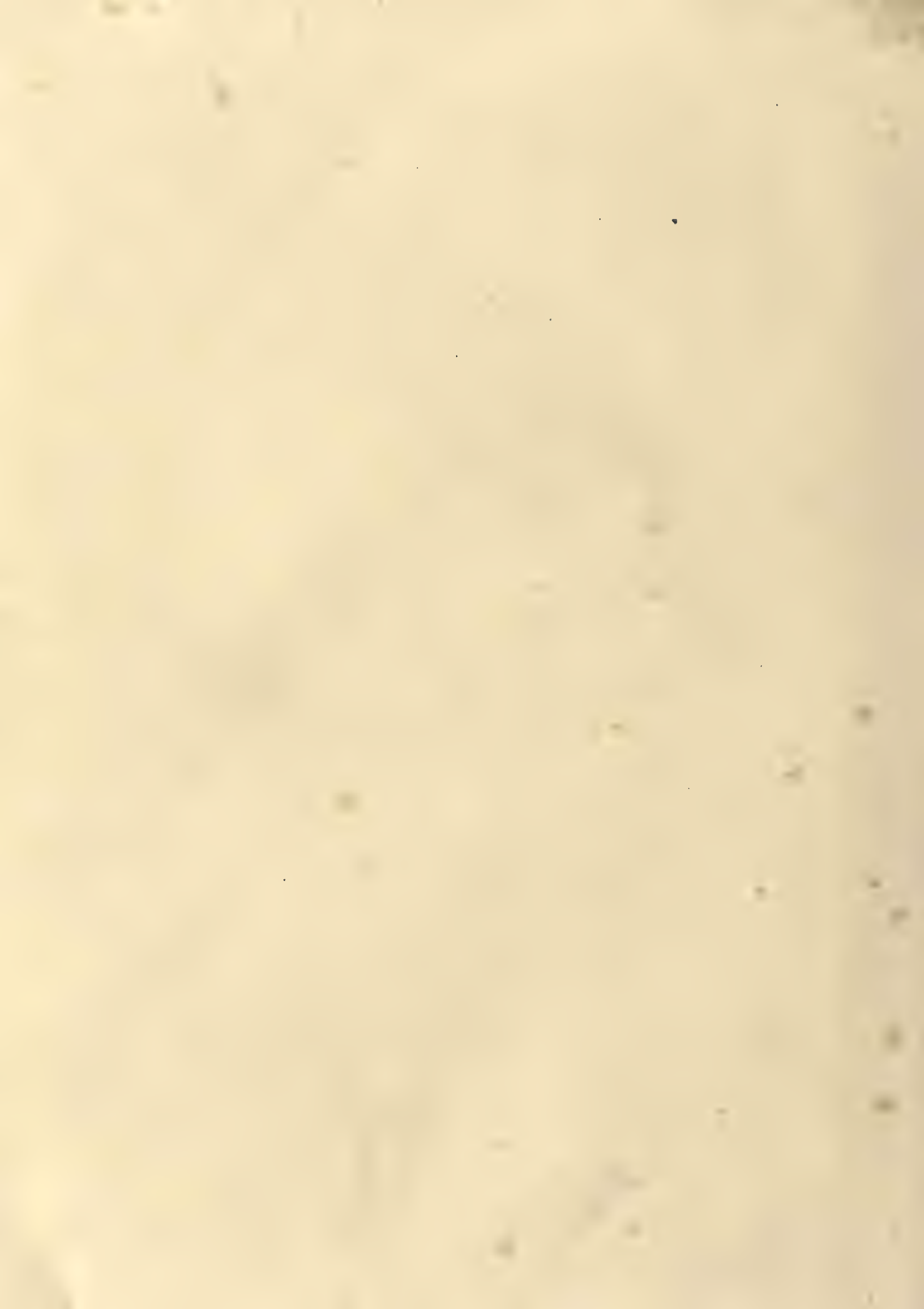
For who the deadly pestilence shall bind,  
Servant to none save the unfettered wind ?  
Who intercept the stroke of sudden death ?  
Or check the ebb of life's retreating breath ?  
What panoply ensure the warrior's life, 665  
And bear him scatheless through the fatal strife ?  
The wildest mind, most fertile in resource,  
Still fails from death its owner to divorce.—

All this I noticed, that I might apply  
To every phase of human destiny 670  
The true solution ; so as to explain  
The case of a bad king's injurious reign :  
For oft I've seen in truth an evil herd  
With royal pomp and circumstance interred,  
Gaining the meed of dignity and worth 675  
While good men in oblivion sank to earth,  
Beguiled of Fame's memorial, in the place  
Where righteousness did all their actions grace.  
And this might lead the thoughtless to infer  
Final impunity for those who err ; 680  
Since sin, absolved from present recompense,  
Fosters a hardened boldness of offence.  
Delusive thought ! for what though man offend  
A hundred-fold, and God as oft extend



WHO INTERCEPT THE STROKE OF SUDDEN DEATH ?  
OR CHECK THE EBB OF LIFE'S RETREATING BREATH ?  
WHAT PANOPLY ENSURE THE WARRIOR'S LIFE,  
AND BEAR HIM SCATHELESS THROUGH THE FATAL STRIFE ?





The hand of Grace, I know that godly fear 685  
Will justify at last each dweller here.  
Did wickedness no present solace give  
All would in voluntary virtue live :  
And why should not the sinner thus possess  
A transitory form of happiness ; 690  
Prolonging what must still most fleeting be,  
And but the semblance of prosperity ?  
True 'tis an outrage on the moral sight  
When Wrong obtains ascendancy o'er Right,  
When Justice pays Injustice' penalties, 695  
And life seems ruled by contrarieties ;  
Regarding but this outward phase of things  
The spectacle dissatisfaction brings,  
And led me erst to the belief that mirth  
Was man's true happiness and aim on earth, 700  
And cheerfulness, with ample fare combined,  
During the term of life by God assigned.  
These I commended as the chiefest good,  
Ere yet the mystery I understood,  
And while regarding but the vain employ, 705  
And surface of man's sublunary joy,  
E'en where Diligence incessant plies  
The utmost task of human energies.  
I therefore contemplated God's whole work,  
And each recess explored where truth might lurk ; 710  
Since an imperfect estimate is won  
Deduced from what occurs beneath the sun.

And vainly may the wisest seek to find  
 In present things the plan that's hid behind;  
 Yea, though a show of truth beguile their toils, 715  
 The true solution every effort foils.  
 I therefore laid to heart this postulate—  
 That all we see implies a *Future State*;  
 And thus impressed I fully understood  
 This mystic paradox of Bad and Good,— 720  
 That "though the righteous claim God's special care,  
 "No outward sign the assurance doth declare,  
 "Nor in th' events of life can we discern  
 "For whom Divine solicitude doth yearn.  
 "His love or hate unmanifested lies 725  
 "Displayed in none of life's contingencies;  
 "Time's accidents occur to one and all,  
 "The Just and Unjust like events befall,  
 "The Pure and the Corrupt alike await  
 "The irrespective ministry of fate. 730  
 "The Worshipper who treads God's holy place  
 "Fares as the man who shuns the Throne of Grace,  
 "The Sinner with the Good one semblance wears,  
 "The man who fears an oath and he who swears.  
 "That all should thus endure a common chance 735  
 "Would argue a defective governance;  
 "That Evil too should still possess the mind,  
 "Infatuation prejudice mankind,  
 "And when life's transitory scene is o'er  
 "The sons of men should sleep to wake no more,— 740



“ Ah, worst of ills! Life in the meanest slave  
“ Is bliss compared to an eternal grave.  
“ Choose whom you will, ‘the lowliest living beast  
“ ‘Still ranks before the noblest one deceased;’  
“ And what though consciousness of sure decay 745  
“ Obscure with casual clouds Life’s sunny day?  
“ Far worse is everlasting death’s estate,  
“ Soulless, insensible, annihilate,  
“ The mind and body, subtle fabric! rent,  
“ Their very record to oblivion sent, 750  
“ The keen affections of the truant will,  
“ Love, Hate and Jealousy, for ever still,  
“ All int’rest marred in things beneath the sun,  
“ All labour unrequited and undone!  
“ If things be thus, and Death the extremest goal, 755  
“ If no impending issue wait the soul,  
“ Then eat thy bread, O man, with cheerful heart!  
“ And let the vine oblivion’s joys impart,  
“ Robe thee in white, Festivity’s array,  
“ And let the oil of gladness mock decay; 760  
“ God hath proclaimed an amnesty to all  
“ And closed the portals of His Judgment-hall;  
“ Charm thee with Life’s intoxicating kiss,  
“ And quaff the raptures of connubial bliss.  
“ These are the gifts of Heav’n, thine own, thy right, 765  
“ Bestowed Life’s weary labours to requite;  
“ Obey each impulse, and exert each power,  
“ Nor dread Hereafter’s speculative hour;

“ For Death will staunch the fountains of thy mind,

“ And leave no pang of retrospect behind,

770

“ Volition’s spark will perish in the tomb,

“ Thine actions slumber in eternal gloom,

“ All Wisdom and Reflection there will cease,

“ Consigned to blank nonentity and peace.”

What then, shall this deplorable resource

775

Ensure the sinner in his cherished course?

Ah no! for even present happiness

None can with daily certainty possess.

Not always doth the speedy win the race,

Or Victory smile at Valour’s rough embrace;

780

Wisdom’s laborious votaries may pine,

And Prudence fail to ope her golden mine.

Moreover, none can see their final doom;

Like fish, men hurry to a treacherous tomb,

Or like the unwary bird, in evil hour

785

Snared by the appetite’s impulsive power—

Thus die the sons of men by Fate’s decree

That sets a bound to all mortality.

## SECTION XVI.

THE ADVANTAGES OF WISDOM IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS.—AN INSTANCE OF THIS IN THE CASE OF  
A POOR MAN.—THE NECESSITY OF CAUTION BEING ANNEXED TO WISDOM.



HIS instance I observed of Wisdom's worth,  
That made me marvel at its power on earth. 790

There was a city, weak in men and arms,  
Aroused precipitate to War's alarms,  
Besieged by one of great and kingly power,  
Who raised around it many a lofty tower.  
But therein dwelt a poor man and a wise, 795

Whose wisdom put to flight his enemies,

And saved the city; though his low estate

Had erst escaped the eye of small and great.

So I exclaimed, "Wisdom surpasses Might,

"Though none the poor man's wisdom may requite, 800

"Though none to gifted Indigence will bend,

"Or to its words consideration lend."

Wisdom's soft tones and self-commending voice

Outweigh the clamour at which fools rejoice;

Wisdom's a panoply of more avail 805

Than sword, or lance, or coat of shining mail.



But yet one careless error in the wise  
A vast amount of good may neutralize.  
As one dead fly with odour pestilent  
Doth the apothecary's ointment taint,  
So will a trivial indiscretion soil  
The sage's tried and honourable toil.  
Wisdom is therefore prompt and circumspect,  
And in the right hand wields her intellect,  
Whereas the Fool, of vigilance bereft,  
Holds, as it were, the weapon in his left,  
And whatsoe'er he do, where'er he goes,  
Doth still his imbecility disclose.

810

815

## SECTION XVII.

ERRORS IN A GOVERNMENT TO BE SUBMITTED TO RATHER THAN RESISTED.—THE DANGER OF IMPEACHING  
RULERS ILLUSTRATED.—WISDOM AND FOLLY CONTRASTED.



HOULD princely indignation 'gainst thee rise,  
 Let not recrimination fire thine eyes, 820  
 Nor quit thine office; rather bow the knee—  
 Submission healeth many an injury.  
 True it anon occurs beneath the sun  
 That errors in a government are done;  
 Folly advanced above its proper sphere, 825  
 And native greatness shackled in the rear;  
 The servile raised to posts of eminence,  
 And lords denied their rightful influence;  
 Yet venture not such wrongs to re-adjust,  
 Nor let thy lips impeach the higher trust; 830  
 For he that digs a pit therein may fall,  
 The lurking snake emerge from out the wall;  
 The underminer may in heedless hour  
 Sink 'neath the quarry's liberated power;  
 The woodman, while he aims the log to cleave, 835  
 May the unwary blow himself receive.

Then caution use in matters great or less,  
In all things Prudence will attain success.  
The reckless slanderer, once detected, feels  
A wound, like serpent's bite, that never heals.  
Wisdom and Leniency walk hand in hand,  
But Folly instant vengeance doth demand;  
To injure others is its first intent,  
And madness is its final punishment;  
It utters slanderous words, devoid of sense,  
And none can tell their dangerous consequence.  
Fools like the devious traveller shall die  
The victims of an aimless industry.

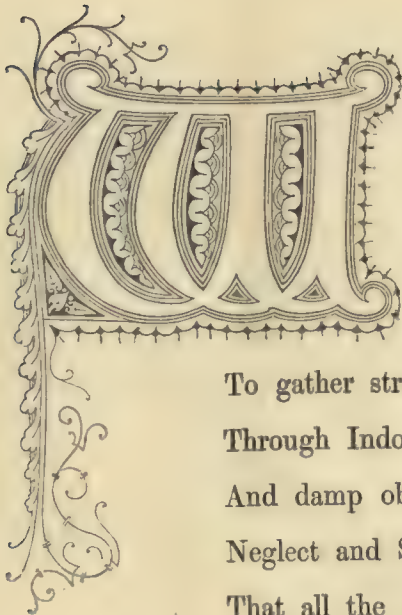
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## SECTION XVIII.

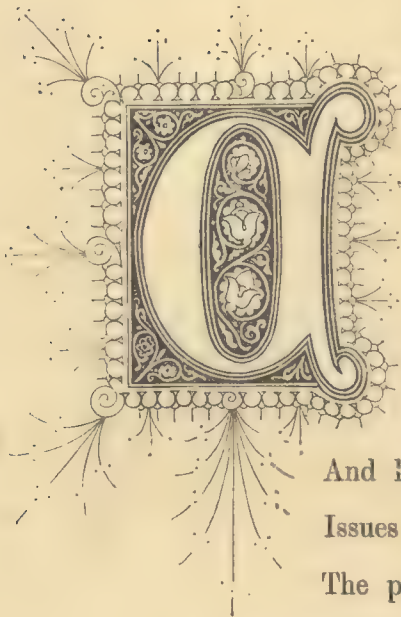
INDUSTRY AND TEMPERANCE AMONG RULERS THE GLORY OF A LAND.—THE EVIL OF  
INDOLENCE.—A CAUTION AGAINST DISLOYALTY.



WOE to the land whose king is imbecile,  
 Whose princes tarry at the morning meal; 850  
 But blessings light on that whose royal Head  
 Of Virtue's true nobility is bred;  
 Whose frugal princes in due season feast,  
 To gather strength—not emulate the beast.  
 Through Indolence a house invites decay, 855  
 And damp obtrudes upon its lawful prey:  
 Neglect and Sloth fair Industry derides,  
 That all the needful wants of Life provides.  
 Yet blame not e'en in thought thy country's king,  
 Nor in thy chamber cherish murmuring; 860  
 Some messenger of air, or wingèd bird,  
 On Malice' pinions may convey the word.

## SECTION XIX.

ADVICE TO MERCHANTS.—COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE NOT TO BE REGULATED BY DIVINATION.—  
PROMPTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE THE SUREST GROUND OF SUCCESS.



COMMIT to distant seas thy merchandise,  
And time shall crown with gain the enterprise.  
But risk not in one bark the goodly freight; 865  
Distribute it in seven or in eight,  
Lest one mischance annihilate thine all,—  
For none can tell what dangers may befall.

And let not Divination false, that scans  
Issues unsearchable, beguile thy plans.

870

The pregnant cloud can only indicate  
That speedy rain the earth will saturate;  
The wizard's rod can no more prophesy  
Than this—that where it falls, it there will lie.  
Thus fools who watch the clouds may fail to sow  
Till from some favoured point the wind shall blow,  
And while they seek for omens in the sky,  
Allow the time of harvest to go by.  
For who shall atmospheric currents trace,  
Or track the winds into their hiding-place?

875

880



BUT RISK NOT IN ONE BARK THE GOODLY FREIGHT;  
DISTRIBUTE IT IN SEVEN OR IN EIGHT,  
LEST ONE MISCHANCE ANNIHILATE THINE ALL,—  
FOR NONE CAN TELL WHAT DANGERS MAY BEFAL.





Who mark the child's formation in the womb  
Till raised by Nature from its living tomb?—  
So none God's purposes can apprehend,  
Who orders all things to a mighty end.  
Then sow thy seed at morning's dawn, nor heed 885  
Short-sighted Augury's deceitful creed.  
Slack not thine hand when evening's shades appear,  
But still, whate'er thy labour, persevere.  
One work may prosper more, another less ;  
In none can mortal eye foresee success. 890

## SECTION XX.

CHEERFULNESS TO BE MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT LIFE.—THE THOUGHT OF FUTURE JUDGMENT SHOULD ACCOMPANY THE LAWFUL ENJOYMENTS OF YOUTH.—THE DUTY OF A TIMELY CONTEMPLATION OF THE CREATOR.—THE INFIRMITIES OF OLD AGE, AND DEATH FIGURATIVELY DESCRIBED.—THE VANITY OF ALL THINGS RE-ASSERTED.



WEET is the Sun's invigorating light,  
 That wakes to brilliancy the shrouded sight !  
 Emphatic emblem ! apt to indicate  
 That cheerfulness the mind should radiate ;  
 Yea, though Life totter to its utmost goal, 895  
 That light and peace should animate the soul,  
 Still armed against Adversity's dark night,  
 When fruitless seem the by-gone days of light.  
 Cherish, O youth ! such buoyancy of heart,  
 And drink the bliss that youthful joys impart ! 900

Walk in the satisfaction of thine eyes,  
 And prosecute Life's various enterprise,  
 Still mindful of the thought that God will bring  
 To future inquisition every thing.

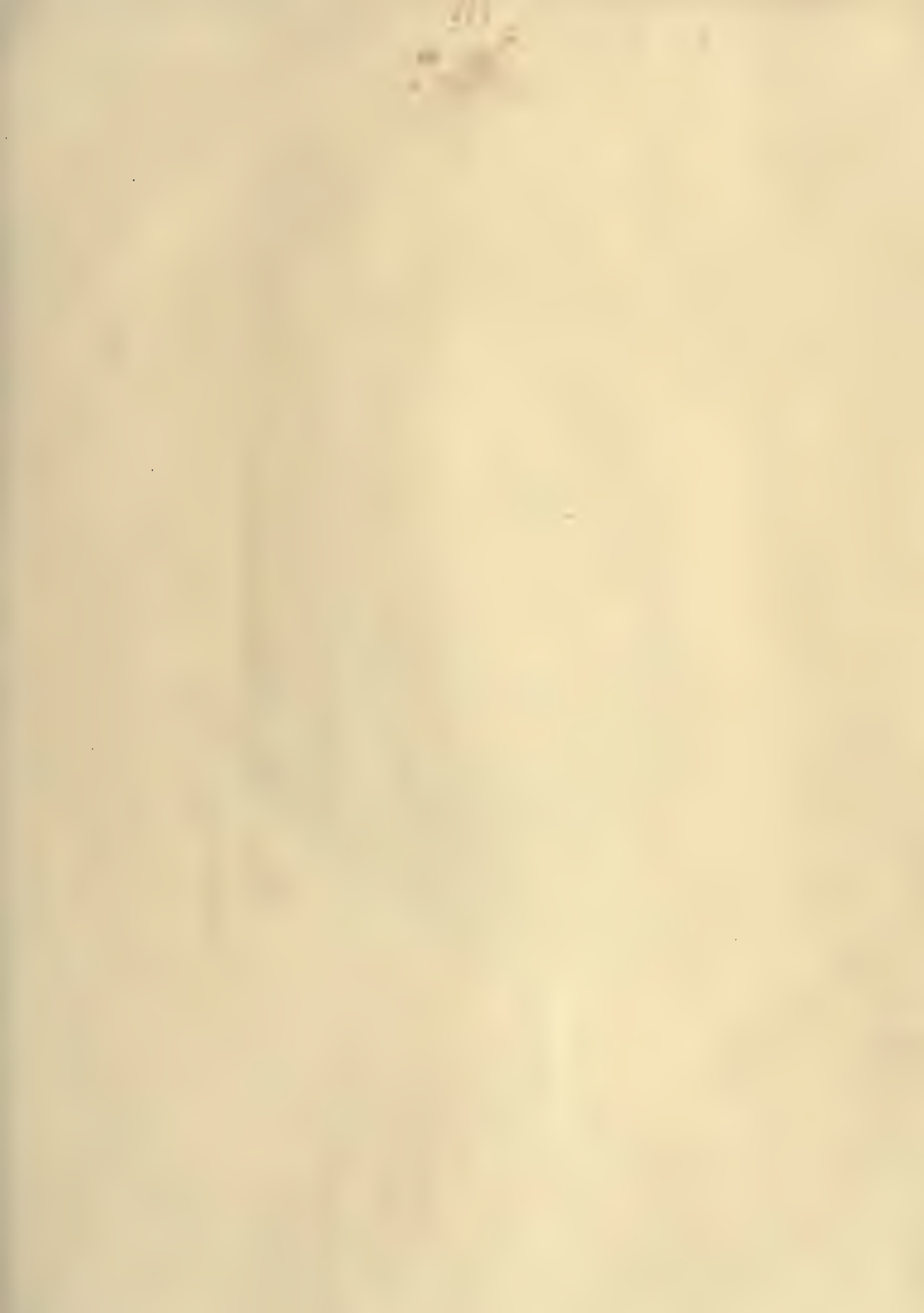
From thy young mind bid Melancholy fly, 905  
 Preserve thy frame in health and energy ;  
 For Childhood passes as the twilight grey,  
 And Youth's bright dawn soon merges into day.





SWEET IS THE SUN'S INVIGORATING LIGHT,  
THAT WAKES TO BRILLIANCY THE SHROUDED SIGHT!









THE SINEWY KEEPERS OF THIS HOUSE OF CLAY;  
AND HALT THE SHRUNKEN THIGHS WITH CROOKED GAIT,

But while keen vigour fortifies the frame  
 Remember thy Creator's hallowed Name : 910  
 Ere yet the days of evil supervene,  
 When Pleasure's faded chaplets strew the scene—  
 While yet the Sun and Light rejoice thine eye,  
 The Moon, and Stars' resplendent galaxy :  
 Ere mists of Age thy vision clear enshroud, 915  
 And Life is dimly seen through humour's cloud ;  
 When quake the arms enfeebled by decay,  
 The sinewy keepers of this house of clay ;  
 And halt the shrunken thighs with crooked gait,  
 Those men of might, beneath the unequal weight : 920  
 When fail the pearly grinders of the corn,  
 And none peep through the lattices forlorn—  
 The functions weak their energy forego,  
 And chill obstruction numbs the vital flow—  
 When e'en the chirping herald of the day 925  
 Will scare the unnerv'd tenant's sleep away,  
 The ears their pleasing property resign,  
 And all the powers of speech and song decline ;  
 When scarce the trembling frame can mount the height,  
 And life is full of danger and affright ; 930  
 The head's white harvest blanches for the tomb,  
 Swift as the almond's evanescent bloom ;  
 The limbs that erst the grasshopper outvied,  
 Resign their nimble and elastic pride ;  
 And fails the appetite's declining sense, 935  
 When Death's precursors summon man from hence,

And mourners throng the streets, and yawns the tomb  
That closes on his everlasting home.

Oh think on God! ere yet the silv'ry link

Of life entangle at the fountain's brink,

940

Ere crack the golden bowl, ere break the pail,

And Nature's wheel of circulation fail;

Ere seeks again the dust its kindred earth,

And flees the soul to God who gave it birth.

Alas! the Preacher cried, his musings done,

945

All, all is Vanity beneath the Sun!



## SECTION XXI.

THE PREACHER'S DIDACTIVE METHOD.—BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE OF THE COMPILATIONS OF WISDOM.  
—GOOD COUNSEL AND ITS PRACTICE SUPERIOR TO ALL ABSTRACT RESEARCH.



AND thus the more the Preacher became wise,  
 The more enlightened he the people's eyes;  
 He knowledge cultivated and explored,  
 And many maxims framed from Wisdom's hoard. 950  
 His aim—to express in trite and pleasing phrase  
 Sound truths, that guide the mind in Virtue's ways.  
 For sages' words like goads transfix the heart,  
 And keenly penetrate the peccant part,  
 And when with skill concentered and combined 955  
 By compilation, they impress the mind;  
 Concurring all in one harmonious whole,  
 As though the offspring of one thinking soul.  
 But thou, my son, give heed to counsel sage,  
 And let not mere research thy time engage; 960  
 For Virtue's practice still availeth more  
 Than abstract truths, or erudition's lore.  
 Books are an endless task, and the excess  
 Of ill-directed study wears the flesh.

## SECTION XXII.

CONCLUSION.—MAN'S DUTY AND HAPPINESS CONSISTS IN FEARING GOD AND KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS.—A FUTURE ACCOUNT TO BE RENDERED OF ALL HIS MOTIVES AND ACTIONS.



O the conclusion of the whole attend, 965

And mark the subject's all-important end!

"Fear God, and keep His laws," whate'er befall,

Such is man's crowning work, his aim, his All.

For in the Eternal register is stored

Each human action; to be re-explored 970

When every secret motive, good or ill,

Shall wait the sentence of the Almighty's will.





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